

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

a521
A8U51
C.3



United States
Department of
Agriculture

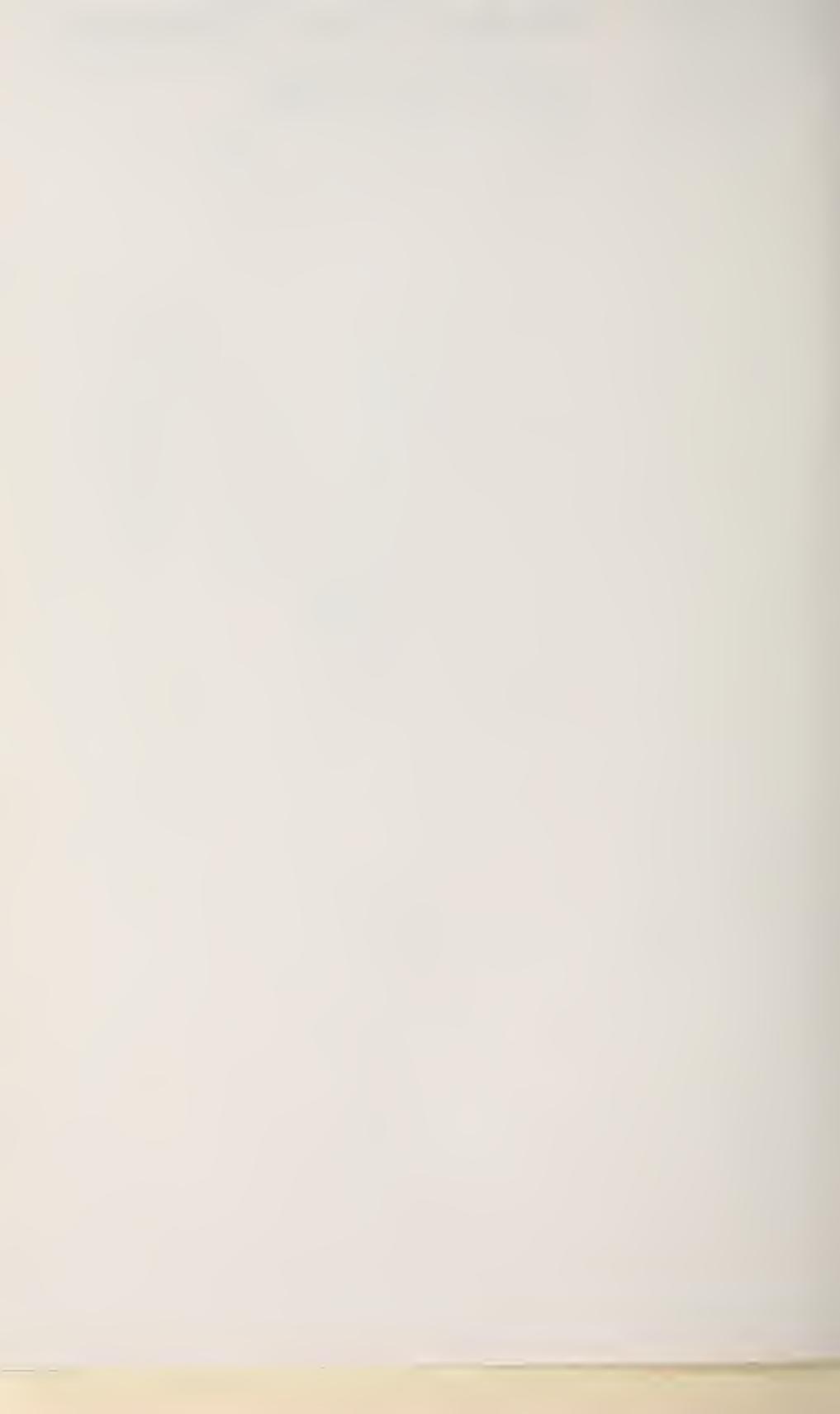
Office of
Governmental
and Public Affairs

Major News Releases and Speeches

January 2-January 9, 1981

1/22/81
FEB 22 '82
JAN
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

1/22/81
FEB 22 '82
JAN
ABRIL 1981
NAT'L RECEIVED



Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

MISSION, TEXAS, SCREWWORM PLANT CLOSE-DOWN REFLECTS PROGRESS TOWARD ERADICATION

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5—Significant progress toward the eradication of screwworms has caused the U.S. Department of Agriculture to close its sterile screwworm fly production plant at Mission, Texas, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture P.R. Smith said today.

"We're closing the Mission plant now because the United States and northern Mexico are virtually free of screwworms," Smith said.

"Continued production at Mission would create a constant threat of fertile flies escaping to reinfest the now 'clean' area."

Today's action will eliminate the jobs of all but 40 to 50 of the 400 people currently working at the Mission plant. They will remain on the payroll for another 60 days, Smith said, during which time USDA will extend every effort to help them find new employment.

"As the eradication effort moves south into Mexico, more and more sterile flies are needed to overwhelm native fly populations. A new screwworm production plant has been built near Tuxtla-Gutierrez, Chiapas—in the heavily infested southern portion of Mexico. This plant can produce roughly two and a half times as many sterile flies as the Mission plant," Smith said.

"By consolidating the production efforts at the Tuxtla plant, USDA can produce many more sterile flies for the same number of dollars," Smith said. "This will also speed eradication efforts, thus eventually saving millions of dollars."

The small force that will be retained at Mission will "mothball" the production plant and provide maintenance. Some workers may also be absorbed by a USDA biological pest control facility being constructed on the old Moore Air Base. In anticipation of the plant close-down, a USDA personnel placement specialist was assigned to Mission in April 1980 by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to help workers find new jobs.

"The specialist, John Nichols, went beyond counseling and retraining to conduct an extensive on-going job search for vacancies throughout USDA, in other federal agencies, and in private industry,"

Smith said. In late July, 138 positions at Mission and the screwworm program's Douglas, Ariz., sterile fly distribution center were abolished in the first phase of moving eradication activities into Mexico. Efforts to find these individuals jobs were highly successful, Smith said.

"Everyone at Mission and Douglas who expressed an interest in alternative employment—and a willingness to relocate—received another job offer, with moving expenses paid by the government," Nichols said. "In fact," he said, "there were more jobs offered than people laid off." However, this may not be the case in the current situation where considerably more people are involved, he said.

Larvae of the screwworm fly feed on living flesh in wounds of warm-blooded animals. Repeated infestations, if left untreated, have killed cattle within ten days. Damage to the livestock industry before eradication efforts began were estimated at \$100 million annually in the southwestern United States and \$20 million annually in the Southeast.

Cooperative federal-state—or commonwealth—programs eradicated the screwworm in the Southeast in 1959 and in Puerto Rico in 1976. International cooperation has now rendered the southwestern United States and northern tier of Mexican states virtually free of the pest.

The basic tool in the eradication process is production and aerial release of millions of sterile male flies. Since female screwworms usually mate only once in their lifetime, the "sterile male technique" effectively breaks the insects' life cycle—eggs resulting from fertile female-sterile male matings will not hatch.

#

Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

USDA PROPOSES CHANGES IN PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6—Members of the livestock and meat industry and the public are invited to comment until March 2 on changes in packers and stockyards' program regulations proposed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"The first phase of an ongoing general review of regulations issued under the Packers and Stockyards' Act has produced several proposed revisions," James L. Smith, a packers and stockyards official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said.

Smith said the significant changes include a proposed substantial reduction in the information required to be included in annual reports submitted by livestock dealers and market agencies, a change which would greatly reduce the time spent in filling out reports.

"We are also proposing that the custodial accounts for shippers' proceeds could be maintained in interest-bearing savings accounts," Smith said. "These accounts are required to ensure prompt payment to consignors of livestock, but there is no reason that the money involved should not be put to work, provided it is properly designated as part of the custodial account."

Smith said the revisions would also include an increase in the amount of the bonds required of dealers to secure more amply the performance of obligations entailed in buying and selling livestock.

"Another proposal," Smith said, "would clarify our policy on sales promotion programs, making it clear that the policy against the point-promotions used by some packers to attract customers applies to all customers, not just retail food stores. We want all firms subject to the act to compete on an equal basis."

Smith said that copies of the proposed rulemaking will be mailed to organizations or businesses which might be affected.

The proposed revisions were published in the Dec. 31 Federal Register, available at many public libraries. Comments may be sent, until March 2, to: deputy administrator, P&S, AMS, USDA, room 3039-S, Washington, D.C., 20250. Copies of the proposals are

available from the same address. All comments will be available for public inspection. The P&S Act is a fair trade practices law administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. It promotes fair and open competition in the marketing of livestock, meat and poultry.

#

Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

COURT ORDER VOIDS PARTS OF USDA STANDARDS FOR COUNTRY HAM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6—The U.S. Department of Agriculture cannot enforce the time and temperature requirements of its standards for country ham because of a recent court order, said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service.

The standards are intended to insure that the products have traditional characteristics before they can be labeled "country ham," "country style ham" or "dry cured ham." They require minimum time periods and a maximum temperature during curing, salt equalization and drying, Houston said.

The standards were challenged by Tennessee Valley Hams Inc., and the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee struck them down Nov. 17.

The rules had required the combined period for curing and salt equalization not be less than 45 days for hams and 25 days for pork shoulders; the total time period for curing, salt equalization and drying not be less than 70 days for hams and 50 days for pork shoulders; and during drying and smoking periods, the internal temperature not exceed 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees Celsius).

Houston said the Food Safety and Quality Service is requiring other provisions of the standard still be met to ensure that country hams maintain traditional characteristics. For example, hams must be coated thoroughly with dry salts so they do not require refrigeration, and they must weigh at least 18 percent less than the fresh uncured product.

USDA is publishing a notice in the Jan. 6 Federal Register stating that time and temperature provisions of rule 9 CFR 319.106, issued Jan. 18, 1977, have not been in effect since Nov. 17. Copies of the Federal Register are available in most public libraries.

#

Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

USDA REPORTS ON STATUS OF GRAINS IN THE FARMER-OWNED RESERVE

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6—Wheat in the farmer-owned grain reserve may not be removed without penalty because wheat prices recently have been below the "release price" for reserves I and III, Ray Fitzgerald, executive vice president of the Commodity Credit Corporation, said today.

The national average adjusted price of \$4.04 for Jan. 2 is 16 cents below the release level for wheat in reserves I and III which had been in release status since Oct. 20. Wheat in reserves II has a \$4.50 release level and had not been released, Fitzgerald said. He said storage payments for wheat will be earned in all states beginning Jan. 1.

Corn, oats and sorghum continue in call status and barley in reserves II and III will remain in release status through January, Fitzgerald said. Storage payments for barley stopped in December in all states and will remain stopped through Jan. 31, he said.

Fitzgerald said the reserve status decisions were made following a review by CCC of a U.S. Department of Agriculture price report released here Dec. 31.

Data used by CCC in determining the release and call levels include the month-end report of prices received by farmers issued by USDA's Economics and Statistics Service. This end-of-month report shows the previous month's average price and the current mid-month price. For wheat, the markets reviewed are Chicago, Kansas City, Minneapolis and Portland.

#

Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

USDA APPORTIONS \$15 MILLION FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7—Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Carol Tucker Foreman announced today that \$15 million in nutrition education and training funds is being made available to states for fiscal year 1981.

"States will use the grants to develop and carry out nutrition education and training in schools for children, teachers and school food service personnel," Foreman said. "These projects provide an understanding of the vital relationship between food, nutrition and health."

Funds available to each state and territory for this program amount to about 30 cents for each child enrolled in schools and child care institutions.

The apportionment of FY 1981 funds to each state is:

Alabama	\$247,437
Alaska	75,000
American Samoa	75,000
Arizona	163,800
Arkansas	142,908
California	1,372,553
Colorado	175,907
Connecticut	194,773
Delaware	75,000
District of Columbia	75,000
Florida	521,330
Georgia	351,179
Guam	75,000
Hawaii	75,000
Idaho	75,000
Illinois	725,168
Indiana	353,770
Iowa	181,521
Kansas	134,358

Kentucky.....	224,508
Louisiana.....	286,251
Maine.....	75,000
Maryland.....	264,421
Massachusetts	354,770
Michigan	615,477
Minnesota	256,366
Mississippi.....	16,032
Missouri.....	299,451
Montana.....	75,000
Nebraska	97,083
Nevada	75,000
New Hampshire	75,000
New Jersey.....	454,191
New Mexico.....	87,706
New York.....	1,066,650
North Carolina.....	371,659
North Dakota.....	75,000
Ohio.....	683,442
Oklahoma.....	182,718
Oregon	148,661
Pennsylvania	712,116
Puerto Rico.....	238,220
Rhode Island.....	75,000
South Carolina.....	203,430
South Dakota	75,000
Tennessee	281,796
Texas.....	920,236
Trust Territory.....	75,000
Utah.....	100,187
Vermont.....	75,000
Virginia	328,407
Virgin Islands.....	75,000
Washington	245,658
West Virginia	118,171
Wisconsin.....	303,389
Wyoming.....	75,000
Total.....	15,000,000

#

Press Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

USDA ISSUES "IDEAS FOR BETTER EATING"

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8—The famous cartoon kid who knew spinach when he saw it wasn't about to be conned into eating his vegetables.

He spoke for a generation of Americans who came to suspect "everything that's good is fattening and everything that's good for me is yuk."

Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture took another step toward laying that old suspicion to rest with the publication of "Ideas for Better Eating," a book of menu suggestions and recipes to help Americans make use of the dietary guidelines, according to Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Carol Tucker Foreman.

Publication of the menu guides fulfills a promise made by USDA officials early in 1981 when USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services issued the booklet, "Nutrition and Your Health—Dietary Guidelines for Americans," she said.

The original guidelines booklet contained seven dietary recommendations with supporting details and explanations of what is known about the relationships of specific dietary substances to some specific chronic diseases and physical conditions.

"Ideas for Better Eating" contains menus showing how the guidelines can be used to create varied and nutritional meals that are enjoyable as well as healthful. Because calorie requirements differ, the menus are designed for different daily calorie levels.

Foreman said the new book addressed the expressed concerns of citizens about the food they eat and its effects on their health.

"USDA nutritionists worked long and hard to devise menus and recipes to help people 'eat good' and eat well at the same time," Foreman said.

While study after study have shown Americans to be increasingly concerned about nutrition, she said, there is little evidence to suggest ordinary citizens and consumers have the knowledge to translate their concerns into healthy dietary habits.

"USDA has been supplying the American people with nutrition information for nearly a century," Foreman said, "and this publication is another step forward in answering the continuing need for relatively simple, easy-to-use dietary guidance that is based on the current state of the nutritional art."

Foreman said USDA's scientists did an excellent job in creating versatile eating patterns which provide needed nutrients and enjoyable foods at varying calorie levels. These recipes are also based on the twin pillars of nutrition science—variety and moderation, she said.

According to "Ideas for Better Eating:" "By and large, Americans have an adequate diet. With very little effort, they could have a better one. In the process, they would increase their chances of staying healthy."

Foreman said the book is an excellent primer for those who choose to make that effort.

Copies are available for purchase from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C., 20402. USDA has no copies for sale.

#

